

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of searching a collaborative document database, comprising the steps of:

providing said database with a plurality of parent documents and a plurality of child documents, each of said child documents being related to at least one of the parent documents in said database;

for each of the parent document documents, building an combining said parent document and the child documents related to said parent document, into a master index document, including listing a portion of said child documents;

i) taking selected field items from the parent document;

ii) placing said selected field items as fields on the index document;

iii) placing text from said parent document in said fields of the index document; and

iv) placing text from said related child documents in said fields of the index document;

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providing a search term; and

searching all said index documents for said search term.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein:

~~each child document is related to at least one of the parent documents; and~~

the ~~building~~ combining step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, at least some of the child documents related to the parent document.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 2, wherein the searching step includes the step of, for each parent document, searching for the search term in the child documents identified in the index document for the parent document.

4. (Original) A method according to Claim 2, wherein the identifying step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, all of the child documents related to the parent document.

5. (Original) A method according to Claim 2, wherein the identifying step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, only the child documents that both are related to the parent document and meet predefined criteria.

6. (Currently Amended) A system for searching a collaborative document database, comprising:

means for providing said database with a plurality of parent documents and a plurality of child documents, each of said child documents being related to at least one of the parent documents in said database;

means for building combining for each parent document, an said parent document and the child documents related to said parent document, into a master index document, including listing a portion of said child documents;

i) means for taking selected field items from the parent document;

ii) means for placing said selected field items as fields on the index document;

iii) means for placing text from said parent document in said fields of the index document; and

iv) means for placing text from said related child documents in said fields of the index document;

means for providing a search term; and

means for searching all said index documents for said search term.

7. (Currently Amended) A system according to Claim 6, wherein:

~~each child document is related to at least one of the parent documents; and~~

~~the building combining means includes the means for identifying in the index document for each parent document, at least some of the child documents related to the parent document.~~

8. (Original) A system according to Claim 7, wherein the searching means includes means for searching, for each parent document, for the search term in the child documents identified in the index document for the parent document.

9. (Original) A system according to Claim 7, wherein the identifying means includes the means for identifying in the index document for each parent document, all of the child documents related to the parent document.

10. (Original) A system according to Claim 7, wherein the identifying means includes means for identifying in the index document for each parent document, only the child documents that both are related to the parent document and meet predefined criteria.

11. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for searching a collaborative document database, said method steps comprising:

providing said database with a plurality of parent documents and a plurality of child documents, each of said child documents being related to at least one of the parent documents in said database;

for each of the parent document documents, building an combining said parent document and the child documents related to said parent document, into a master index document, including listing a portion of said child documents;

i) taking selected field items from the parent document;

ii) placing said selected field items as fields on the index document;

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iii) placing text from said parent document in said fields of the index document; and

iv) placing text from said related child documents in said fields of the index document;

providing a search term; and

searching all said index documents for said search term.

12. (Currently Amended) A program storage device according to Claim 11, wherein:

~~each child document is related to at least one of the parent documents; and~~

the building combining step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, at least some of the child documents related to the parent document.

13. (Original) A program storage device according to Claim 12, wherein the searching step includes the step of, for each parent document, searching for the search term in the child documents identified in the index document for the parent document.

14. (Original) A program storage device according to Claim 12, wherein the identifying step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, all of the child documents related to the parent document.

15. (Original) A program storage device according to Claim 12, wherein the identifying step includes the step of identifying in the index document for each parent document, only the child documents that both are related to the parent document and meet predefined criteria.

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